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CI 513

Tech Activity

Game found at: <http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/European_Geography.htm>

I focused on Sheppard Software’s interactive geography games. Specifically I explored the sections on European Geography, as it would be helpful for students to learn about where certain countries are when they read about important battles and which countries were invaded or conquered. There are different variations of these games that can be tailored to those who have more knowledge of geography or those who need more instruction. It appears as though it is intended for middle school students. However, some of the more expert levels could be challenging even for adults.

The game that I focused on was the intermediate Level 3 game which asks students to identify where each European nation belongs on the map. Students are given a country and have to drag and drop the country into the place where it belongs without the benefit of having the lines drawn on the map. It is actually quite challenging, even for an adult who has a rough idea where all these countries are. Incorrect responses are highlighted in red. At the end of each round students can review their score and find out how far off they were on average for the countries that they answered incorrectly. Students can try again as many times as they want in order to improve their score. This game could be played as part of a group, but it lends itself well to individual study as well.

The major benefit of this game is that it teaches European geography (at least the modern-day nation states). This information is helpful to students studying any aspect of European history. For example, it would help students to know where Germany is in relation to France to understand concepts like the Maginot Line and to understand why the German army might consider invading France by way of Belgium. However, there are certain drawbacks to this game as well. Once a student has played the game once, they may quickly lose interest as the game isn’t different every time. While the game is interactive in the sense that students choose where they will place a country, it doesn’t truly allow students to compete against each other or to come together to solve complex problems. Also, this would be better suited for Geography class that for a History class. Due to the ever-evolving map in Europe, the countries change so frequently that they don’t accurately reflect what the map would have looked like in past years.